

DRAFT
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR THE
NEW HANGAR AND ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FACILITY
FOR
UNITED STATES CUSTOMS AND BORDER PROTECTION
OFFICE OF AIR AND MARINE
AGUADILLA, PUERTO RICO

INTRODUCTION

This document is a Finding of No Significant Impacts (FONSI) for the new hangar and administrative support facility which is being proposed for Rafael Hernandez (aka “Borinquen”) International Airport at Aguadilla, Puerto Rico. The new facilities will serve the operations of the Office of Air and Marine (OAM) of the United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP), a federal law enforcement agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The proposed project is being managed by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA).

PROJECT HISTORY

The mission of the CBP OAM is to protect the American people and the Nation’s critical infrastructure by using air and marine forces to detect, interdict and prevent acts of terrorism and the unlawful movement of people, illegal drugs, and other contraband toward or across the borders of the United States. Air and Marine Interdiction Agents are endowed with the authority to enforce Title 8 (Aliens and Nationality) and Title 19 (Customs) of the United States Code in addition to the general law enforcement powers bestowed upon federal law enforcement agents. CBP OAM has operated in Aguadilla since the 1970's. Originally, operations were housed in an existing hangar, built in the 1940's as part of Ramey AFB. Subsequently, an adjacent support building was built. Capacity of the existing facilities is insufficient to serve current needs, reducing the efficiency of CBP operations.

PURPOSE AND NEED

Existing facilities for OAM's Caribbean Air and Marine Branch (CAMB), also known as the Aguadilla Air Unit, do not adequately support mission requirements, which have increased during the recent past due to increased illegal activities around Puerto Rico. Present OAM operational needs exceed the current capacity of the existing facilities. The new hangar and administrative support building will address these needs. The new hangar and support facility will adjoin the existing CBP facilities at Aguadilla.

PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed action consists of the construction of a Maintenance Hangar with an approximate floor area of 20,000 square feet (1,858 square meters), an Administrative Support Building with

approximate floor area of 10,000 square feet (929 square meters), an open hangar area with fifteen (15) parking spaces, extension of existing infrastructure (principally electric and water service facilities), and associated site and access modifications.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

A total of four (4) alternative configurations for the proposed project were initially identified as feasible for the project. All of these alternatives satisfy the needs of the project and have similar environmental impacts. The alternative finally selected is a modified version of one of the 4 initial alternatives, which incorporates all changes to the original design program developed during partnering sessions between the design/build team and representatives of GSA/CBP. The selected alternative consists of a hangar with approximately 20,000 SF of floor area, with a one story 11,800 SF attached support building.

Under the "No Action" alternative the proposed project would not be constructed. Not undertaking the proposed project would hinder the ability of the CBP OAM to fulfill its assigned mission. This would increase the vulnerability of Puerto Rico, and the Nation as a whole, to illegal activities and terrorist actions. For this reason, "No-Action" is not a viable alternative. in the present case.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The proposed project will be located in the tarmac which adjoins the RHIA airport runway, next to the existing CBP facilities. Environmental systems in the area have been eliminated and no significant cultural or structural resources are present. Adverse environmental impacts will be minimal and limited to the construction stage of the project.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Sustainability and environmental considerations have been taken into account at all times during the conceptualization, planning and design of the proposed project. The general idea is to avoid any actions that may affect the environment whenever possible.

The project construction perimeter will be clearly demarcated. No disturbance outside that perimeter will be allowed. Within the designated perimeter, the area to be disturbed at a given time will be minimized by proper staging of work and coordinating deliveries of materials and equipment to only those needed for effective project implementation.

A General Permit for Construction activities will be obtained from the Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board (EQB). As part of the requirements for this permit, a detailed environmental control plan will be prepared and implemented. The environmental control plan will include a plan for the control of erosion and sediments ("CES plan"), a plan for the minimization and control of fugitive dust emissions, a management plan for construction-related solid wastes and a recycling plan for wastes generated during the construction stage. In addition, in order to secure coverage under the EPA Construction General permit for stormwater, a Notice of Intent (NOI) certifying that the permit's

effluent limits and other requirements will be complied with will be filed by the contractor. To attain the CGP requirements, a stormwater pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) will be prepared and implemented for the project site.

Other general mitigation measures that will be applied during construction are the following:

1. At the start of construction, construction personnel will receive general training on environmental protection measures, as well as project specific training on how to comply with the requirements of the CES, SWPP and SPCC plans.
2. Contamination of ground and surface waters will be avoided by storing any water that has been contaminated with construction materials, oils, equipment residue, etc., in closed containers onsite until removed for disposal. Storage tanks must have proper air space (to avoid rainfall-induced overtopping), be on-ground containers, and be located in upland areas instead of washes.
3. In the event any contamination of soil or water resources occurs during construction, remediation activities will be conducted in compliance with applicable EPA and EQB requirements.
4. Drip pans under will be placed under parked equipment and containment zones will be established when refueling vehicles or equipment.
5. Lighting impacts that may disturb neighbors or airport operations during the night will be avoided, by conducting construction and maintenance activities during daylight hours whenever possible. If night lighting is unavoidable: 1) minimize the number of lights used, 2) place lights on poles pointed down toward the ground, with shields on lights to prevent light from going up into sky, or out laterally into the vicinity.
6. To reduce traffic impacts, movement of construction, maintenance and delivery vehicles on the surrounding roads will be conducted at off-peak hours whenever possible.
7. Demolition or other activities that can generate significant levels of noise will be conducted during regular working hours.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the analyses conducted during the preparation of the EA and on the mitigation measures that will be incorporated as part of the Proposed Action, it is concluded that the Proposed Action will not result in significant adverse effects on the environment. Therefore, no further environmental impact analyses are warranted.